MARVEL
003
STAR WARS
DARTH VADER
SOULE • CAMUNCOLI • SMITH • CURIEL

THE CHOSEN ONE

Part III

The Clone Wars are over. The Jedi are defeated. Palpatine has become the Emperor, finally in position to bend the galaxy to his will through the power of the Sith.

Jedi Knight Anakin Skywalker, swayed by Palpatine's promise to help prevent the death of his pregnant wife Padmé, betrayed the Jedi and became the Sith Lord Darth Vader. His wife died nonetheless.

Under orders by Palpatine to locate a surviving Jedi and corrupt the kyber crystal within their lightsaber, Vader invaded an old Jedi way station and accessed the archives to search for any possible survivors of the Jedi purge. Now, Vader is headed toward Jedi Master Kirak Infil'a, one of the last remaining relics of the Jedi Order....

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The Mid-Rim.
River Moon
Of Al'doleem.
KCHK!
GOOD.

VERY GOOD.

KTHNK!

FIGHTING WHILE ASSEMBLING FOUR PADAWAN'S TRAPS AT ONCE, MASTER INFIL'A? IT SEEMS ILL-ADVISED, EVEN FOR YOU.

THE EASY PATH RARELY LEADS TO A WORTHWHILE DESTINATION, AREX.

THKK!

I HAVE SPENT TIME WITH MANY JEDI HERE, OVER THE YEARS, AND I WOULD LIKE TO BELIEVE I HAVE ABSORBED SOME SMALL PIECE OF THEIR WISDOM.

WITH THIS IN MIND, PLEASE FORGIVE ME IF I SUGGEST YOUR PHILOSOPHY IS OVERLY SIMPLISTIC.

YOU HAVE CHOSEN A MOST DIFFICULT PATH INDEED. IT MAY LEAD TO YOUR DEATH.

THE EASY PATH, HOWEVER, WOULD ALLOW YOU TO **LIVE**. PERHAPS NOT AS A **JEDI**, NOT OPENLY, BUT--

I AM A JEDI. PRETENDING OTHERWISE WOULD NOT BE EASY.

KCHK!

IT WOULD BE **IMPOSSIBLE**.

SOMETHING IS COMING. SOMETHING...DARK. PREPARE THE MOUNTAIN'S DEFENSES.

YES, MASTER INFIL'A.

PROXIMITY ALERT, LORD VADER. OBJECTS APPROACHING RAPIDLY FROM QUADRANT TWO.
CLARIFY "OBJECTS." MISSILES? SHIPS?
NO. NO DRIVE SIGNATURE. BEST ANALYSIS SUGGESTS THEY ARE...
...ART.

THOOOM!
TRACE BACK THE OUTBOUND TRAJECTORY. FIND ME A TARGET.
WE HAVE SUSTAINED DAMAGE TO PRIMARY AND SECONDARY THRUSTERS. SHIELDS NON-OPTIMAL. SUGGEST IMMEDIATE LANDING.
NO. THEY WOULD HAVE A CHANCE TO FLEE.
RESPECTFULLY, LORD VADER, WE LOSE THE TARGET OR WE LOSE THE SHIP.
KRRRCK!
I HAVE LOST NOTHING.
THE JEDI IS OUT THERE. I CAN SENSE HIM.
I WILL COMMENCE REPAIRS IMMEDIATELY.
WE SHOULD BE FULLY OPERATIONAL WITHIN TWO STANDARD DAYS, AT WHICH POINT WE CAN ENGAGE YOUR ENEMY DIRECTLY.
NO. HE IS WAITING FOR ME. HE IS EXPECTANT.
I DO NOT WISH TO DISAPPOINT HIM.

SLAM!

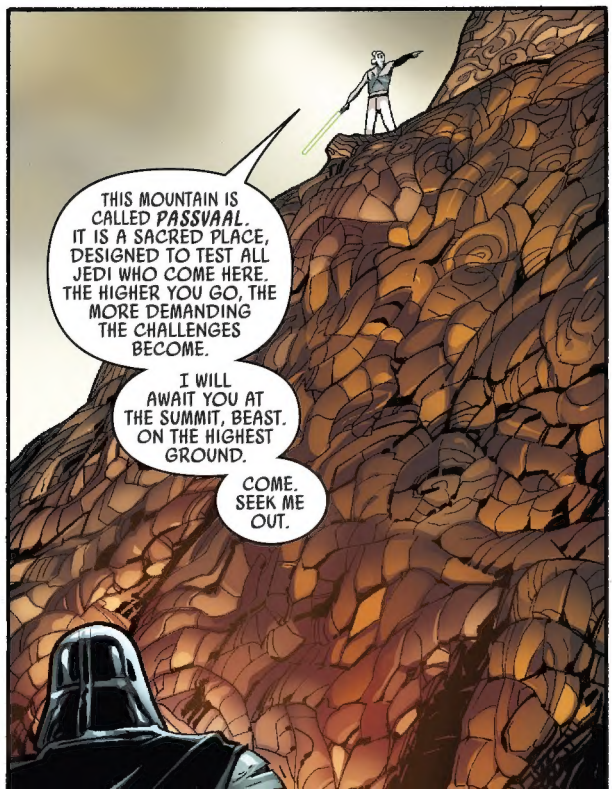
YOU.
YOU STINK OF DARKNESS.
WAS IT YOU?

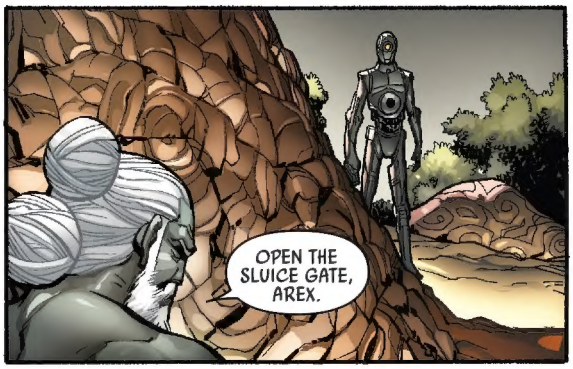
KKKT!
NNNN...
...NO!
SSSK!
NNGH!

YOU WILL NOT DEFEAT ME THAT WAY, CREATURE. YOU WILL NOT DEFEAT ME AT ALL.
YOUR USE OF THE DARK SIDE CONFIRMS MY SUSPICIONS--BUT LET ME ASK AGAIN.
NOT LONG AGO, THROUGH THE FORCE, I FELT THE DEATH OF ALMOST EVERY JEDI. THAT DARKNESS RESONATES WITHIN YOU.
DID YOU DO IT? DID YOU KILL THEM?
YES.
ARE YOU HERE TO KILL ME AS WELL?
YES.
AS I HOPED.

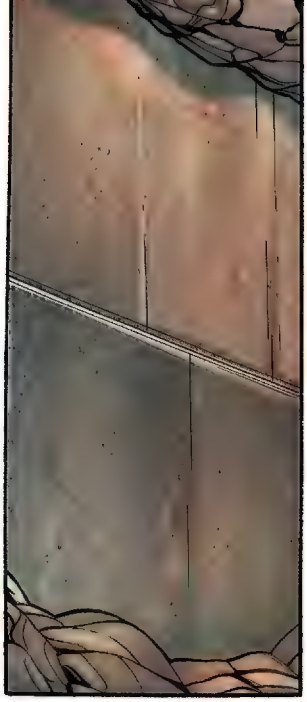
FOR MY TRANSGRESSIONS, I TOOK THE BARASH VOW, TO LIVE ALONE INSIDE THE FORCE, UNTIL MY TRUE PATH AS A JEDI BECAME CLEAR.
TO LIVE OUTSIDE THE ORDER, AND TAKE NO ACTION ON ITS BEHALF NO MATTER THE CIRCUMSTANCES-- EVEN ITS END.
YOU MUST KNOW THAT, OR YOU WOULD NOT HAVE KNOWN TO LOOK FOR ME HERE. IT IS ALSO WHY I STAYED HERE-- I KNEW YOU WOULD COME, EVENTUALLY.

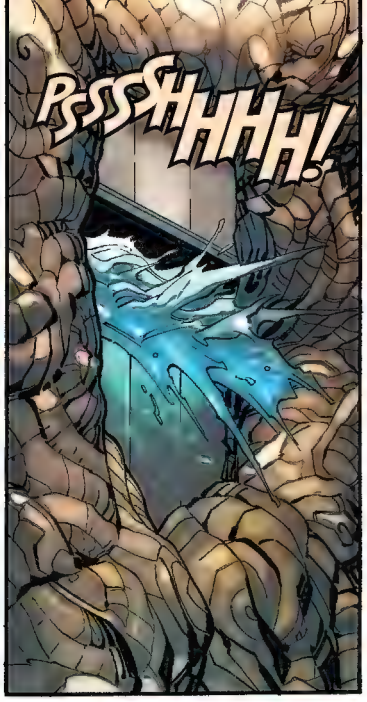
I DECLARE MY BARASH COMPLETE, FOR MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS ARE DEAD, AND THEIR MURDERER STANDS BEFORE ME.
I KNOW MY PATH, KILLER, AND ITS END IS ALSO YOURS.


THIS MOUNTAIN IS CALLED *PASSVAAL*. IT IS A SACRED PLACE, DESIGNED TO TEST ALL JEDI WHO COME HERE. THE HIGHER YOU GO, THE MORE DEMANDING THE CHALLENGES BECOME.
I WILL AWAIT YOU AT THE SUMMIT, BEAST. ON THE HIGHEST GROUND.
COME. SEEK ME OUT.


OPEN THE SLUICE GATE, AREX.

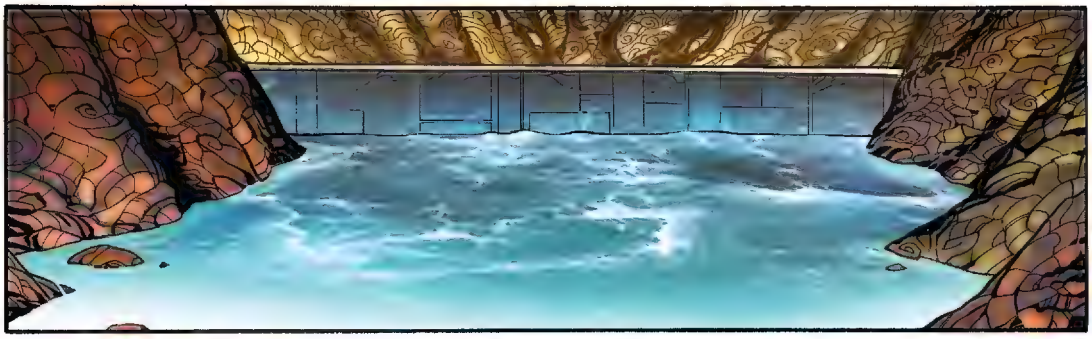
RIGHT AWAY, MASTER INFIL'A.

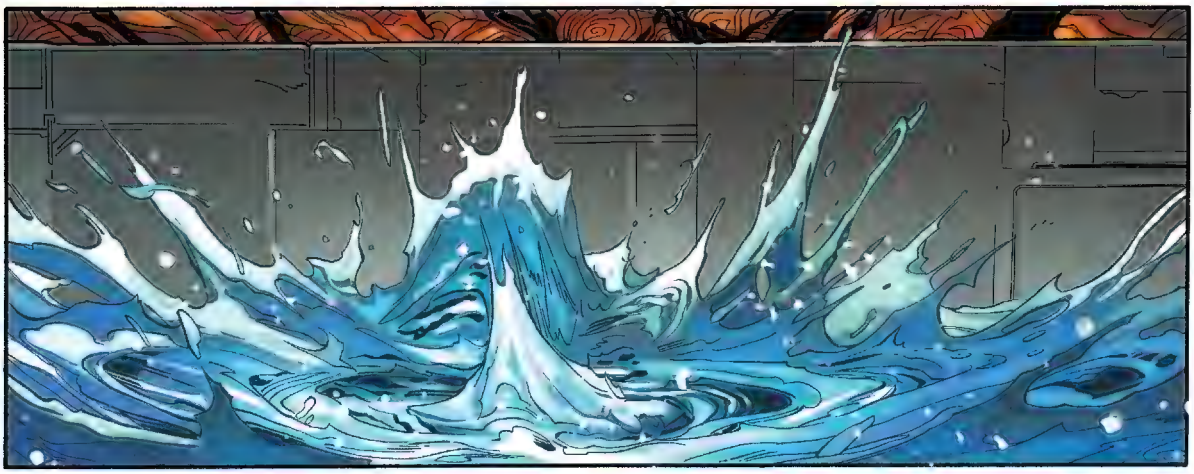



PSSSHHHH!

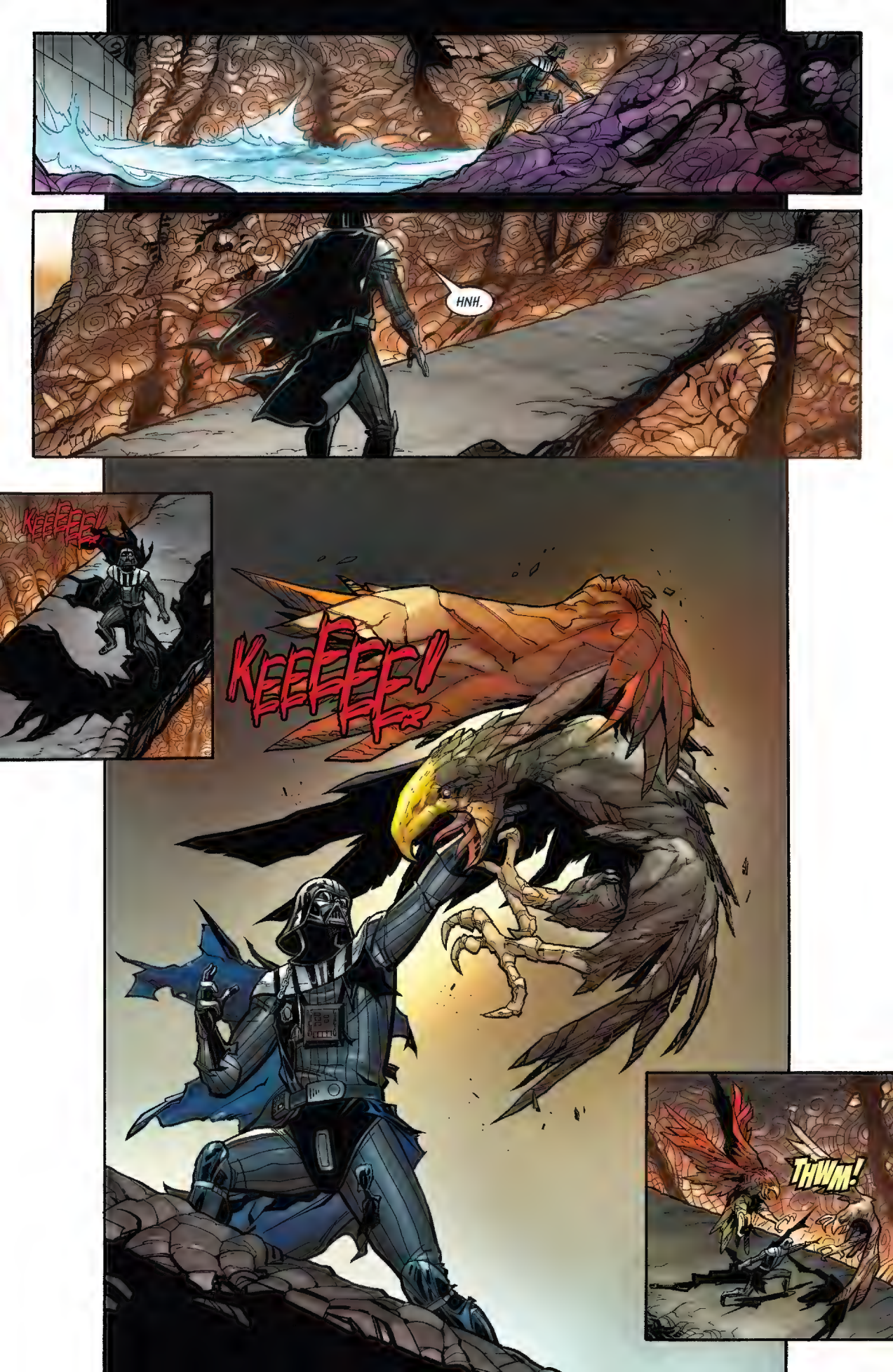
FWSSSSH!

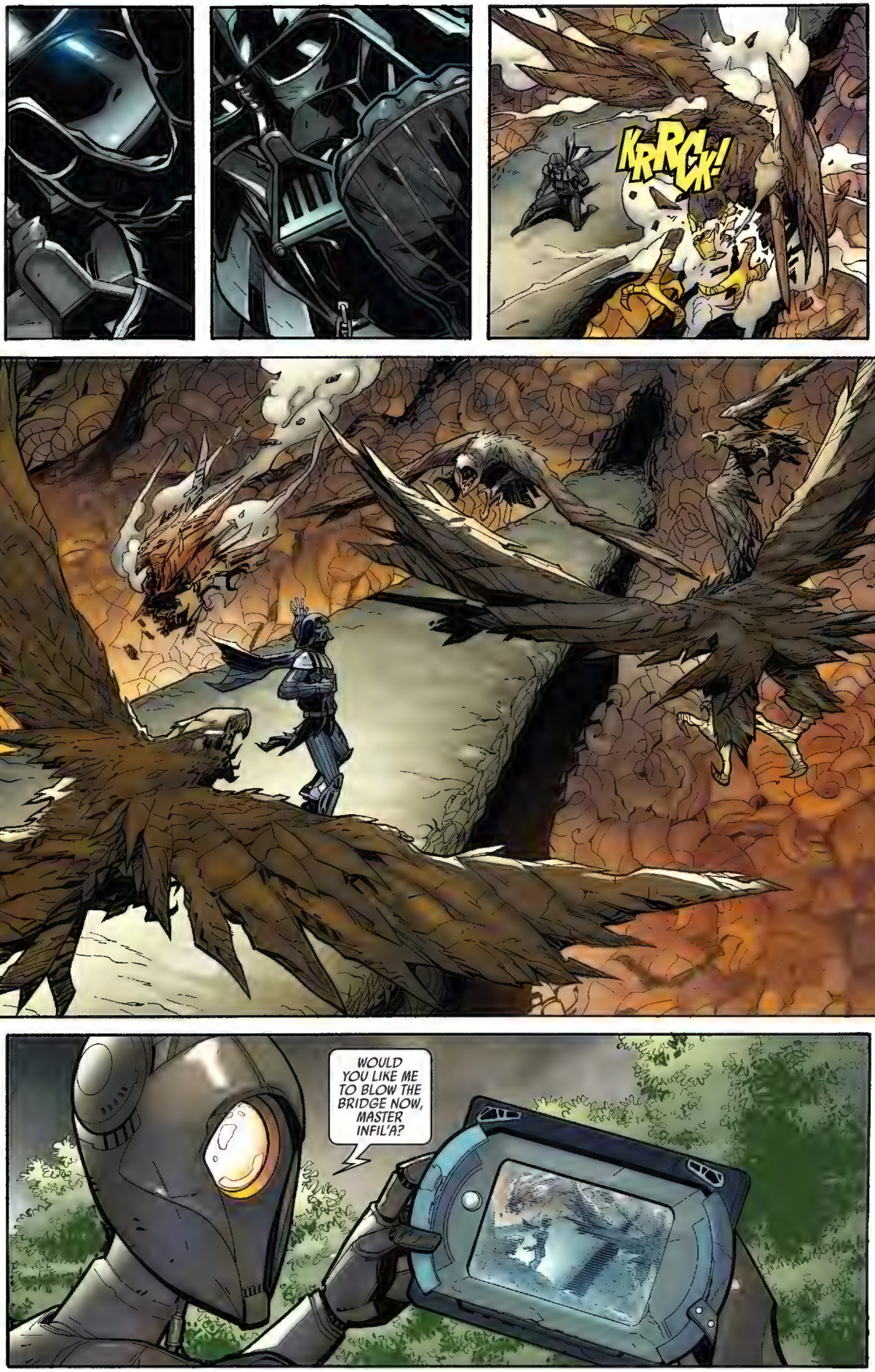
KLNNGG!



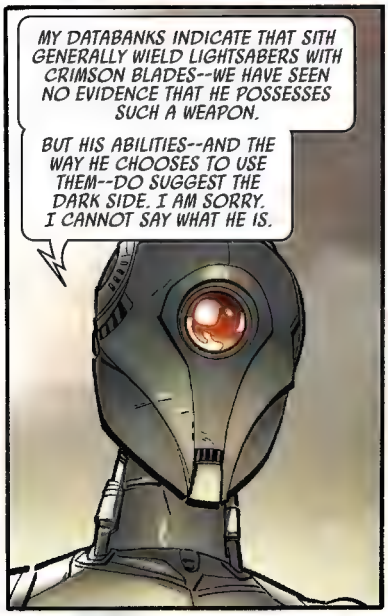


FWSSSH!

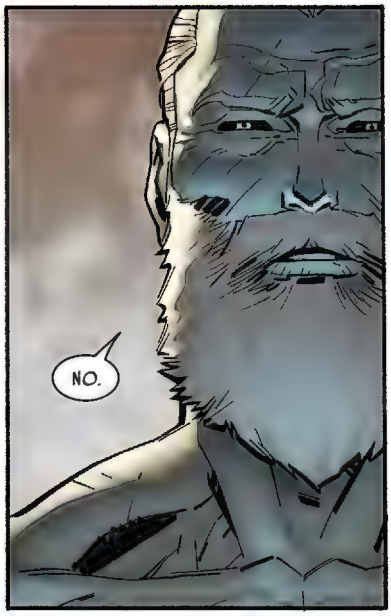

HNH.
KEEEEE!
KEEEEE!
THWM!

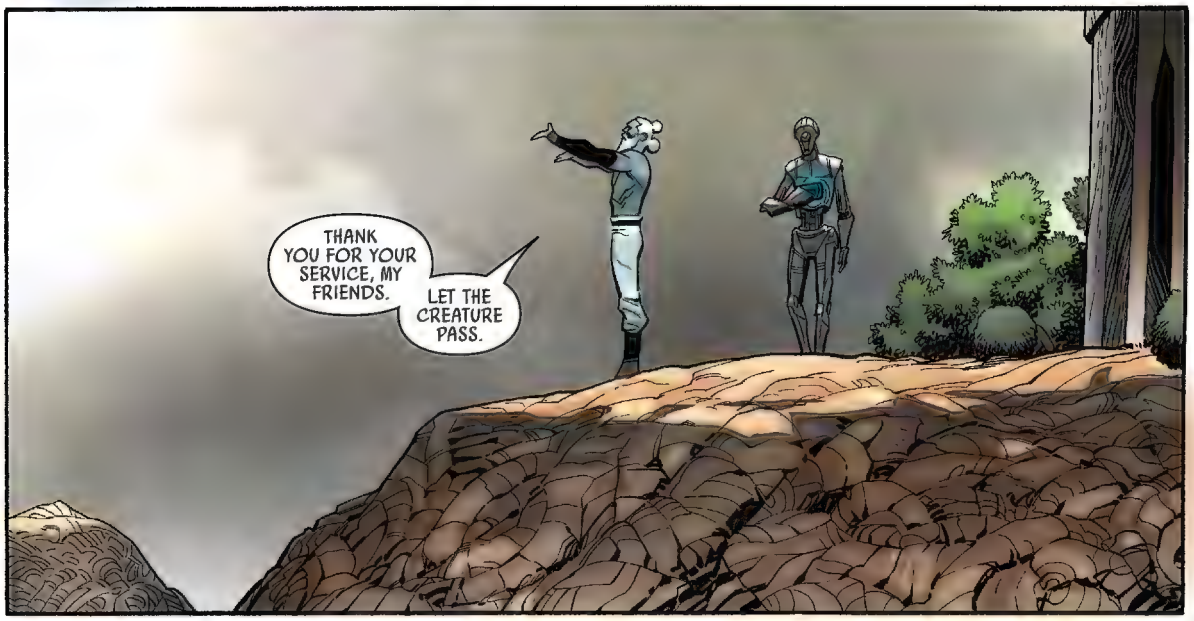

KRRCK!
WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO BLOW THE BRIDGE NOW, MASTER INFIL'A?

I CAN FEEL HIM DOWN THERE. COLD, DARK. ALL THE PAIN I FELT WHEN THE JEDI DIED--IT'S LIKE HE TOOK IT ALL INTO HIM.
WHAT IS HE, DO YOU THINK? SITH? OR SOME OTHER SORT OF MONSTER?


MY DATABANKS INDICATE THAT SITH GENERALLY WIELD LIGHTSABERS WITH CRIMSON BLADES--WE HAVE SEEN NO EVIDENCE THAT HE POSSESSES SUCH A WEAPON.
BUT HIS ABILITIES--AND THE WAY HE CHOOSES TO USE THEM--DO SUGGEST THE DARK SIDE. I AM SORRY. I CANNOT SAY WHAT HE IS.

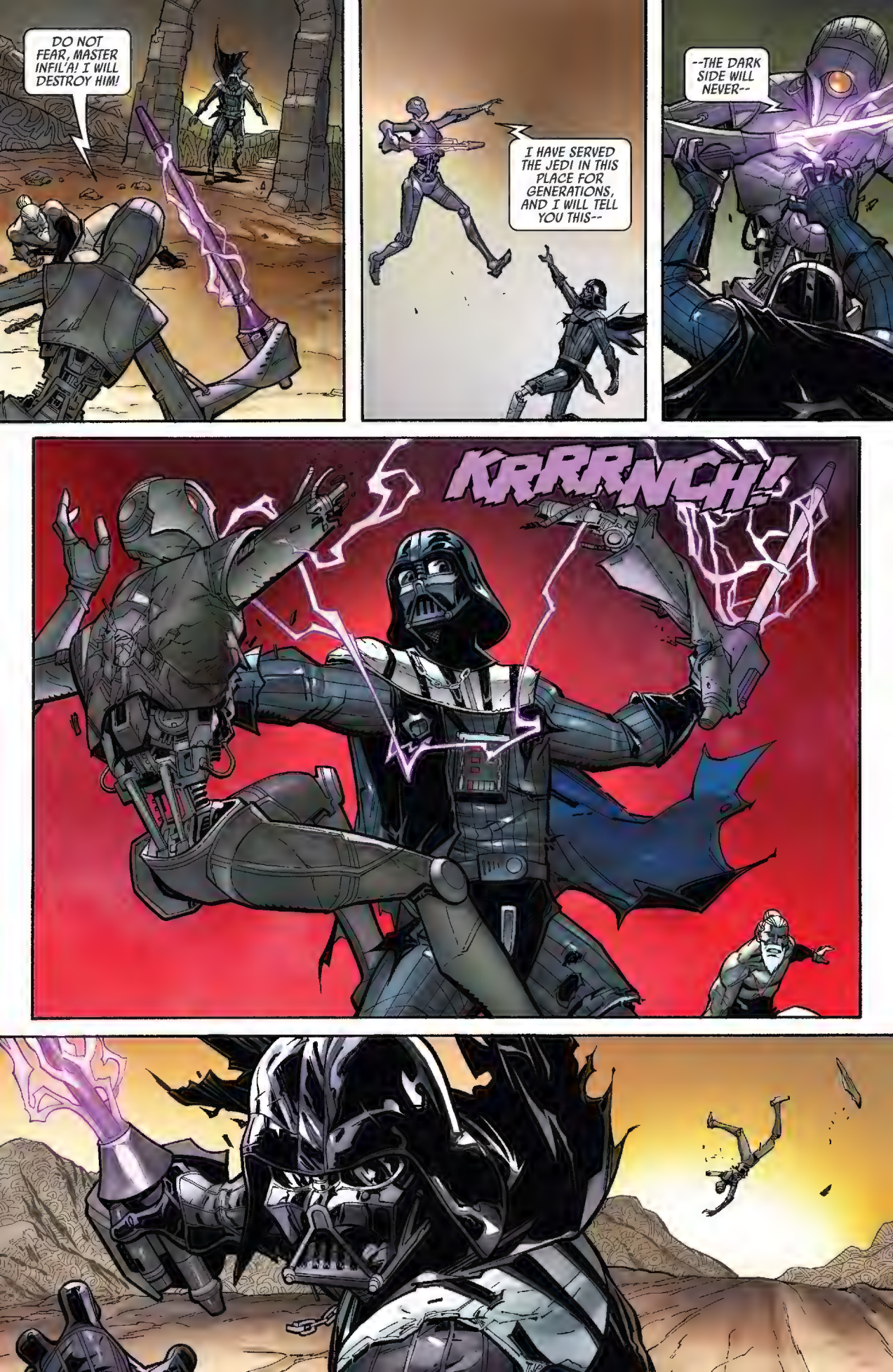
BUT I KNOW HE IS DANGEROUS. HE WILL DEFEAT THE RAPTORANS SHORTLY.
IF YOU WISH TO BRING DOWN THE BRIDGE, THE TIME IS NOW.


NO.


THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE, MY FRIENDS.
LET THE CREATURE PASS.

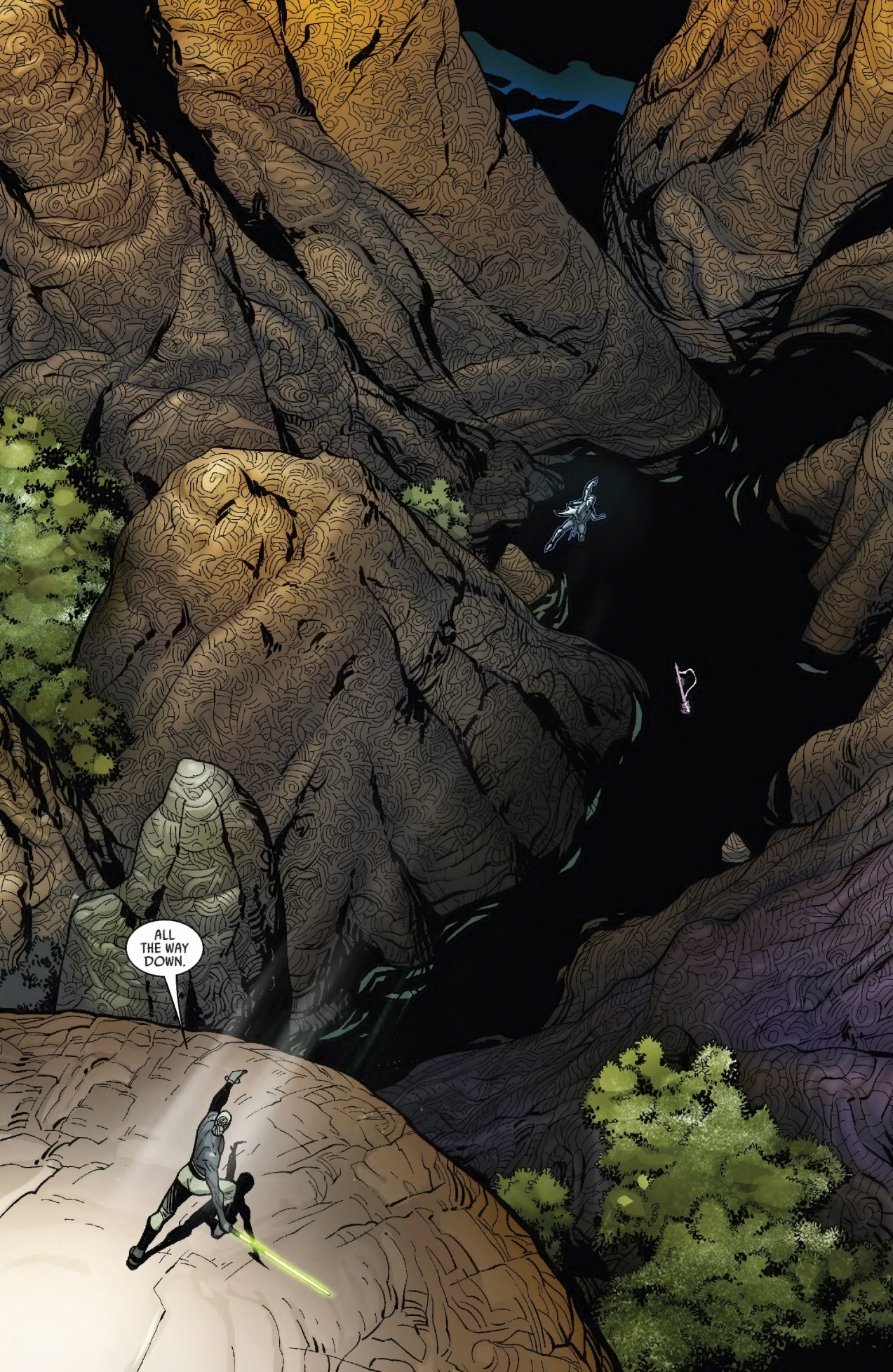
KRRNCH!
HE WILL REACH THE SPIKEWIND NEXT. I WILL ACTIVATE IT AT THE APPROPRIATE MOMENT.
NO. NO MORE TRAPS, NO MORE OBSTACLES. TURN THEM OFF. ALL OF THEM.
BUT...IN THAT CASE...HE WILL BE HERE IN NO TIME AT ALL!
CORRECT.

GRRRNCH!
ALMOST THERE, CREATURE. ALMOST TO THE TOP.
KEEP GOING. YOU CAN DO IT. I BELIEVE IN YOU.
SHHRM!
GAH!
KRRCK!


DO NOT FEAR, MASTER INFIL'A! I WILL DESTROY HIM!
I HAVE SERVED THE JEDI IN THIS PLACE FOR GENERATIONS, AND I WILL TELL YOU THIS--
--THE DARK SIDE WILL NEVER--
KRRRNCH!

I KNOW WHAT YOU WANT. I KNOW WHY YOU'RE HERE. IT'S NOT JUST TO KILL ME. YOU CAME HERE TO GET SOMETHING. I CAN SENSE IT.
KZZK!
YOU WANT MY LIGHTSABER.

HOW DID YOU END THE JEDI? IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE.
GRRRNCH!
YOU ARE WEAK.
NO. YOU COULD NOT HAVE DONE IT ALONE.
THERE MUST BE SOMEONE ELSE. A MASTER.
GRRRNKK!
SKKRNCH!
ONCE YOU ARE DEAD, I WILL SEEK OUT YOUR MASTER AND DESTROY HIM AS WELL.
AND THEN, I WILL RESTORE THE LIGHT OF THE JEDI TO THE GALAXY.
THINK ON THAT, MONSTER.


ALL THE WAY DOWN.

DARTH VADER
NEXT ISSUE: